

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 0297

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PBOR, PDEV PFOR CVIS SC

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF NEW CONSTITUTION FOR ANGUILLA

REF BRIDGETOWN 0274

1. REFTTEL, BASED ON ITEMS IN LOCAL PRESS, REPORTED RECENT CHANGE IN CONSTITUTIONAL STATUS OF ANGUILLA. UNDER HEADLINE "ANGUILLA RETURNS TO BRITISH EMPIRE," UPI REPORT DATED FEBRUARY 10, THE VALLEY, ANGUILLA (THE VALLEY IS THAT ISLAND'S CHIEF TOWN) STATED THAT ANGUILLA HAD "HOYFULLY" REVERTED TO COLONIAL STATUS. REPORT POINTED OUT THAT ITS 6,000 PEOPLE WANTED NEITHER INDEPENDENCE NOR CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP IN ASSOCIATED STATE OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA. "TODAY ANGUILLA'S COLONIAL STATUS BECAME OFFICIAL WITH A NEW CONSTITUTION GOING INTO EFFECT THAT PUTS THE COLONY UNDER THE WING OF A RELUCTANT BRITAIN," THE REPORT AVERRED.

2. COMMENT: IN EFFORT TO ASCERTAIN ACCURACY OF THIS REPORT, EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH OFFICIALS OF BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HERE. INITIAL APPROACH ELICITED ONLY EMBARRASSED REPLY THAT HIGH COMMISSION UNINFORMED OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS, WAS SEEKING INFORMATION FROM ANGUILLA AND GUIDANCE FROM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LONDON. TODAY (FEB 17) ACTING HIGH COMMISSIONER

DEBURLET INFORMED DCM THAT, IN FACT, NEW CONSTITUTION WAS ADOPTED BY ORDER-IN-COUNCIL ON FEB 10. ANGUILLA, HOWEVER, WILL NOT REVERT TO COLONIAL STATUS, OR MORE ACCURATELY, WILL NOT BE OFFICIALLY DESCRIBED AS A COLONY. IN ANSWER TO QUESTION AS TO WHAT, IF NOT A COLONY, ANGUILLA WILL HENCEFORTH BE, DEBURLET JOCARLY SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE DESCRIBED SIMPLY AS "AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT IN THE OCEAN." DESPITE NEW CONSTITUTION, DEBURLET POINTED OUT, ANGUILLA REMAINS "TECHNICALLY" PART OF ASSOCIATED STATE OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA, SINCE WEST INDIES ACT OF 1967 DOES NOT GIVE HMG POWER TO DETACH ANY PART OF AN ASSOCIATED STATE WITHOUT CONCURRENCE OF GOVERNMENT OF THAT STATE.

3. IN RECENT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR, PREMIER ROBERT BRADSHAW OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE KNEW NOTHING OF A CHANGE IN ANGUILLA'S STATUS AND THAT HE WILL NEVER AGREE TO RECOGNIZE SECESSION OF ANGUILLA. IN A LETTER BRADSHAW SUBSEQUENTLY SENT THE AMBASSADOR, HE SPECIFICALLY WARNED THAT, FOLLOWING THE ACCESSION OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA TO INDEPENDENCE, HE WOULD "RENOUNCE, CONDEMN AND REJECT" IN THE UNITED NATIONS ANY AGREEMENT MADE WITH "THE BRITISH AND/OR OTHERS" TO LEASE DOG ISLAND. WHILE ANGUILLANS, WHO WILL GO TO POLLS IN MID-MARCH TO ELECT MEMBERS OF NEWLY ESTABLISHED HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, APPARENTLY ARE HAPPY ABOUT ADOPTION OF THE CONSTITUTION, THIS EVENT HAS CLEARLY NOT RESOLVED LONG-STANDING DEBATE AS TO WHAT ANGUILLA'S RELATIONSHIP TO TRIPARTITE STATE OF ST. KITTS-NEVIS-ANGUILLA IS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE DOG ISLAND PROPOSAL PRESENTS SAME DIFFICULTIES AS BEFORE. END COMMENT.
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